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Three Fragments of a Judaeo-Arabic Translation of Ecclesiastes with Full Tiberian Vocalisation

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Abstract

Judaeo-Arabic manuscripts with complete vocalisation are rare, a problem which makes reconstructing the pronunciation of the medieval language challenging. This study presents an edition of a Judaeo-Arabic translation of Ecclesiastes from the Cairo Genizah with full Tiberian vocalisation. This manuscript exhibits noteworthy features of dialectal medieval Arabic and a palaeographic style which places it in twelfth-century Egypt-Palestine. The transcription system provides specific evidence for the pronunciation of a type of medieval Judaeo-Arabic, while the translation offers a window into the culture of popular Bible translations and scribal activity in the medieval Middle East.

Keywords

Judaeo-Arabic – Middle Arabic – vocalisation – palaeography – dialectology – Bible translation – Genizah

1 Introduction¹

One of the challenges facing scholars of Judaeo-Arabic is the limited information available concerning the pronunciation of the medieval language, particularly with respect to vowels. Only a small percentage of Judaeo-Arabic manuscripts (MS/MSS) contain written vowel signs, and the majority of those are vocalised only sporadically.² This paper presents a manuscript which breaks from that tendency, and offers a rare glimpse into the linguistic background of a twelfth-century Judaeo-Arabic translation of Ecclesiastes with full Tiberian vocalisation.

The extant manuscript is comprised of three parchment bifolia from the Cambridge University Library's Taylor-Schechter (T-S) and Lewis-Gibson (L-G) collections: T-S Ar.27.55; T-S Ar.53.12; and L-G Ar.1.150. The two T-S Ar. fragments appear in Baker and Polliack's *Arabic and Judeo-Arabic Manuscripts*, but they did not notice that the pair belong together.³ L-G Ar.1.150 has not been described in any catalogue. Khan refers to T-S Ar.53.12 several times in his studies of vocalised Judaeo-Arabic,⁴ but none of these fragments have been published as editions before now. The manuscript's text spans Ecclesiastes 2:8 to 12:12, and probably represents the writer's personal Judaeo-Arabic translation of the Hebrew original.⁵

The following discussion contains three parts. The first describes the palaeography of the manuscript, using comparative methods to demonstrate that it was most likely written in the Egypt-Palestine area during the twelfth century. The second then examines the vocalisation and orthography of the text, using the high concentration of vowel signs to identify both dialectal and pseudo-classical features that differ from Classical Arabic (CA). Finally, the third part

1 This work was supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation [OPPI144]. We would like to thank Ben Kantor and Joseph Habib for their insightful observations on the transcription, Nadia Vidro for her editorial comments, and Judith Olszowy-Schlanger for her comments on the palaeography.

2 See Khan, "Vocalized Judaeo-Arabic Manuscripts," pp. 201–218; *idem*, "Orthography and Reading in Medieval Judaeo-Arabic," pp. 395–404; Vidro, "Arabic Vocalisation in Judaeo-Arabic Grammars," pp. 341–351; Blau and Hopkins, "A Vocalized Judaeo-Arabic Letter," pp. 417–476.

3 Baker and Polliack, *Arabic and Judeo-Arabic Manuscripts*, nos 2155 and 7728.

4 Khan, "Vocalized Judaeo-Arabic Manuscripts," pp. 204–205, 208–209; *idem*, "Orthography and Reading," pp. 400–401; *idem*, "The Function of the Shewa Sign," p. 105.

5 In any case, it does not match the translations of Ecclesiastes by Sa'adya Gaon, Salmon ben Jeroham, or Yepheth ben 'Ali. See Vajda, *Deux Commentaires Karaïtes* and Bland, *The Arabic Commentary of Yepheth ben 'Ali*. A cursory comparison reveals some lexical similarities between these versions and the translation discussed in this article, likely due to no more than their shared Hebrew source material.

presents an edition and translation of the extant material, along with comments on noteworthy features from the transcription.

It is hoped that these elements will provide a useful guide for understanding the historical context and linguistic significance of this manuscript. Ultimately, it is a valuable witness to the adaptation of Hebrew vowel signs to Middle Arabic, and enhances our understanding of the phonetic realisation of spoken medieval Arabic in a period when vocalised manuscripts are relatively scarce.

2 Palaeography

The extant fragments comprise six single-column parchment leaves (three bifolia), containing all or part of Ecclesiastes 2:8–2:15, 2:22–3:5, 4:12–5:1, 5:8–5:15, and 11:8–12:12. The most complete leaf is T-S Ar.53.12, which measures 14.9×16.5 cm. All leaves originally contained 11 lines. The lines and margins are clearly ruled, and the outside margins are pricked. The flesh side is easily distinguished from the hair side. Hebrew incipits mark the beginning of each verse. They are smaller than the main Judaeo-Arabic text, but have a similar palaeographic style. We conducted this analysis with microscopy in visible and ultraviolet light in order to clearly see the ornamentation, stroke order, and thickness of each letter. What follows is a detailed palaeographic description of the letters of the main text as a point of comparison for future scholarship.

As a whole, the palaeographic style is typical of a professional Egyptian-Palestinian (“Eastern”) hand from the late eleventh to early twelfth century AD. It is a small yet sophisticated book-hand script. Some components of the letters are found in earlier (ninth- and tenth-century) Eastern manuscripts, but these components also persist in the Eastern book-hands of later centuries, and the overall rounded and simplified style points toward a twelfth-century date.⁶

2.1 *Branched Letters* (ʾālep, têt, ʾayin, šādê shîn)

All branched letters have the fundamental shape and stroke order seen in Eastern hands from the tenth to twelfth centuries. However, the ducti joining the

6 Many thanks to Judith Olszowy-Schlanger for her assistance in clarifying the date of the script style. For comparative references which generally match this manuscript’s script, see Yardeni, *Book of Hebrew Script*, “Eastern Book-Hand” (chart 24); David, *The Hebrew Letter*, examples 5A–6B; Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*, plates 92–93, 184–189; Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Medieval Hebrew Scripts*, charts 1–36.

branches to the main strokes are thick and the serifs are significantly rounded, which are typically later features. The horizontal bottom strokes of *têt* and *shîn* are notably flat.

- *Ālep*:⁷ The top serif is not a separate stroke, but instead flows smoothly into the main stroke, which curves slightly downward at the bottom. The leftmost branch attaches to the top of the middle stroke, which is an Eastern feature. The *ʾālep-lāmed* ligature is comprised of integral features from both letters and fits the aforementioned script style.
- *Ṭêt*:⁸ The top fits a tenth-century palaeography, but the bottom horizontal stroke is flat, a feature seen in comparable twelfth-century MSS.
- *ʾayin*:⁹ Some *ʾayins* are noticeably upright. The leftmost branch joins the main stroke higher than expected for the assessed script style, but the top and bottom serifs both fit it well.
- *Ṣādê*:¹⁰ Shaped like *nûn*, with a right branch proceeding almost perpendicularly from the middle stroke.
- *Shîn*:¹¹ Similar to *têt*, *shîn* has a flat base, and the middle stroke joins the left-hand stroke at a high point. These features are seen in ninth-century script styles, but the roundness of the strokes and serifs are comparable to twelfth-century MSS.

2.2 Right-Angled Letters (*bêt*, *dālet*, *hê*, *hêt*, *rêsh*, *tāw*)

The shape and ornamentation of these letters match comparative script styles for a tenth-century Eastern hand. However, these simple letters tend to keep similar shapes over longer periods of time, so they also have parallels in twelfth-century scripts.¹²

- *Bêt*: The downward stroke does not narrow significantly before being subsumed by the sweeping, slightly curved bottom stroke. It is easily distin-

7 Comparative examples: Yardeni, *Book of Hebrew Script*, charts 23, 24, fig. 208; David, *The Hebrew Letter*, figs 5B, 6A, 6B; Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*, plates 184, 186, 188; Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, charts 5, 35–36.

8 Yardeni, *Book of Hebrew Script*, chart 23; David, *The Hebrew Letter*, fig. 5A; Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*, plates 92, 93; Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, chart 2.

9 The closest overall comparison is Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, charts 8, 35.

10 Yardeni, *Book of Hebrew Script*, chart 23, fig. 208; David, *The Hebrew Letter*, fig. 5A; Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*, plates 184–186.

11 Yardeni, *Book of Hebrew Script*, chart 23, fig. 208; Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, charts 1, 3, 4, 35.

12 See especially, Yardeni, *Book of Hebrew Script*, chart 24 and fig. 108, and Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, chart 35.

guished from *kāp* by a sharp edge protruding backwards beyond the downwards stroke.

- *Dālet*: The top of the downward stroke is ornamental, beginning well above the horizontal roof, which has a strong serif at the leftmost end.
- *Hê*: The same base shape as *dālet*; the left bottom branch attaches to the roof.
- *Ĥêt*: Both downstrokes begin slightly above the horizontal line, less severely than *dālet* and *hê*.
- *Rêsh* and *tāw*: The serif and angle typically appear in earlier (tenth-century) Eastern styles.

2.3 Vertical Letters (*gîmel*, *wāw*, *zayin*, *nûn*)

These letters match the fundamental shapes and stroke orders of a tenth-century Egyptian-Palestinian hand, although the ornamentation is more rounded than some comparative script styles; this rounding is more common in twelfth-century samples.

- *Gîmel*:¹³ The middle stroke is straight and extends seamlessly into the top serif, which is poorly-defined and points steeply upward. This feature deviates slightly from comparative styles which have more angular strokes. The bottom stroke attaches high in the middle of the mid-stroke, which is typical for the assessed period.
- *Wāw*:¹⁴ Closely matches the tenth-century Eastern book hand and comparable twelfth-century scripts.
- *Zayin*:¹⁵ Short, which is typical of tenth-century Eastern book hand. However, like the top of *gîmel*, there is no stroke break between the middle stroke and the serif, which is another feature seen in comparative twelfth-century scripts.
- *Nûn*:¹⁶ The serif is rounded and flows seamlessly into the main stroke, fitting a tenth-century Eastern script style as well as the later twelfth-century style.

13 Yardeni, *Book of Hebrew Script*, charts 23, 24; David, *The Hebrew Letter*, fig. 5A; Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*, plate 184; Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, charts 3, 5.

14 Yardeni, *Book of Hebrew Script*, chart 23, fig. 208; Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, charts 35, 36.

15 Yardeni, *Book of Hebrew Script*, chart 23, fig. 208; Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, charts 35, 36.

16 Yardeni, *Book of Hebrew Script*, charts 23, 24, fig. 208. Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*, plates 186, 189.

2.4 *Rounded Letters* (kāp, mēm, sāmek, pê)

The basic forms and ornamentation of these letters agree with the Egypt-Palestine palaeography, and small deviations in them place the script in the twelfth century.

- *Kāp* and *mēm*: Both letters match the assessed script style exactly. *Mēm* has a straight roof common in twelfth-century comparative texts.
- *Sāmek*:¹⁷ The roof is flat with no ornamentation. A slight bump is visible on the rightmost side of the top stroke, where the downward stroke begins.
- *Pê*:¹⁸ The letter is notably compact and its bottom half extends far past the left stroke. This lengthening may reflect influence from an Arabic script style.

2.5 *Tall Letters* (kāp sôpît, lāmed, pê sôpît, šādê sôpît, qôf, nûn sôpît)

These letters retain the fundamental shape of their medial counterparts.

- *Kāp sôpît*:¹⁹ Matches the twelfth-century Eastern hand.
- *Lāmed*:²⁰ Basic, without serifs, which is similar to some twelfth-century comparative scripts.
- *Pê sôpît*:²¹ The lefthand “nose” sometimes attaches below the top curve of the main stroke.
- *Šādê sôpît*: The top stroke matches that of medial *šādê*.
- *Qôf*:²² The long bottom stroke attaches to the roof a bit further past the serif, a feature seen in the twelfth-century comparative scripts.
- *Nûn sôpît*:²³ The top serif, like all serifs in this hand, is rounder than in many tenth-century comparative script styles, indicating the later twelfth-century date. The length tends to be shorter than the downstroke of other *sôpît* letters.

17 Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*, plate 92; Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, charts 35, 36.

18 Yardeni, *Book of Hebrew Script*, chart 24, fig. 208; David, *The Hebrew Letter*, figs 5A, 6A; Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*, plates 92, 189; Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, charts 1, 3, esp. 36.

19 Yardeni, *Book of Hebrew Script*, chart 24, fig. 208; David, *The Hebrew Letter*, fig. 6A; Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*, plates 93, 189; Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, charts 35, 36.

20 Yardeni, *Book of Hebrew Script*, chart 23; David, *The Hebrew Letter*, fig. 5A; Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*, plates 92, 186; Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, chart 36.

21 David, *The Hebrew Letter*, fig. 6A; Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*, plate 189; Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, charts 1, 5, but esp. 35, 36.

22 Yardeni, *Book of Hebrew Script*, chart 24, fig. 208; David, *The Hebrew Letter*, chart 6; Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*, plates 93, 186, 189; Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, chart 11 and especially charts 13, 36.

23 Yardeni, *Book of Hebrew Script*, chart 24; Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*, plate 189 (but longer

3 Arabic Dialectology

The vocalisation and orthography reflect dialectal features that differ from Classical Arabic. Some of these features are fairly general, occurring in many varieties of Arabic, but a few indicate Egyptian influences on the scribe who wrote the manuscript. Simultaneously, the text follows Classical grammar and morphology in most respects, and it reflects a fairly high register of Arabic. It even contains several cases of “classicised” language with hyper- or hypo-corrected forms.²⁴ The nearly-complete state of the vocalisation is particularly useful for identifying these dialectal and pseudo-Classical forms, especially since the Tiberian pointing system can represent wider range of vowel qualities than the typical Arabic *fatha* (/a/), *kasra* (/i/), and *ḍamma* (/u/) signs. The following discussion examines differences between Classical Arabic and the dialectal features in the Arabic of this text, mainly with respect to vowels and consonants.

3.1 Vowels

The majority of medieval Judaeo-Arabic manuscripts lack anything approaching complete vocalisation, often making it difficult to reconstruct the intended phonology of medieval Arabic words. This limitation extends to nearly all of Middle Arabic, as even most Arabic-script texts are sporadically vocalised at best. In fact, some of the most significant direct witnesses for medieval Arabic vocalisation are not in Arabic script at all, but rather transcriptions in Greek,²⁵ Coptic,²⁶ and “phonetic” Judaeo-Arabic²⁷ which record short vowels via *plene* spellings. There are also a some “classical” Judaeo-Arabic manuscripts with substantial Tiberian vocalisation, although parchment manuscripts of this type are rare.²⁸ With its near-complete Tiberian vocalisation, this Ecclesiastes manuscript provides another critical source for extracting the vowel phonology of medieval dialectal Arabic from a Middle Arabic text.

and less angular); Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, charts 5 (closest match), 8 (but shorter), 10; Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, chart 35.

24 See Khan, “Judaeo-Arabic,” p. 156.

25 Blau, *Handbook*, pp. 29, 68–71; Violet, “Ein zweisprachiges Psalmfragment,” pp. 384–403, 425–441, 475–488.

26 Blau, *Handbook*, pp. 29, 155–167; Sobhy, “New Coptic Texts,” pp. 234–267.

27 Blau, *Handbook*, pp. 29, 136–154; see also, Blau and Hopkins, *Ha-'Aravit ha-yehudit ha-qedumah*; and Blau and Hopkins, “On Early Judaeo-Arabic Orthography.”

28 Khan, “Vocalized Judaeo-Arabic Manuscripts,” pp. 201–218; Khan, “The Function of the Shewa Sign,” pp. 105–111; Blau and Hopkins, “A Vocalized Judaeo-Arabic Letter,” pp. 417–476.

In these fragments, the Tiberian *pataḥ*, *ḥîreq*, and *qibbûṣ* signs occur regularly where CA would have *fatḥa*, *kasra*, and *ḍamma*, respectively. *Ṣērê* appears four times in the manuscript,²⁹ and in the two clearest readings it represents /ē/ as an allophone of CA /ā/. *Sĕgōl* does not occur except as a *ḥātēp* vowel, and there are no clear readings with *ḥōlem* or *qāmeṣ*. In general, the manuscript does not record final vowels, and the only indication of case marking is the occurrence of *ʾālep* in places where CA has *tanwīn alif*. Throughout the text, *ḥîreq* before final *ḥê* indicates the equivalent of Arabic *tāʾ marbūṭa*, while a *qibbûṣ* before final *ḥê* indicates the 3ms pronominal suffix. This latter feature is an imitation of Classical Arabic orthography, although the suffix was likely pronounced as the dialectal form *-u*.³⁰

Shûreq also occurs frequently, both where CA has /u/ and where CA has consonantal *wāw*. In these cases of consonantal *wāw*, the dot within the letter may actually be a *dāgēsh* or the equivalent of *mappiq*, and only appears to look the same as the *shûreq* vowel sign. See, for example, אַקְוָאֵל (*ʾaqwāl^{an}*, “sayings,” 12:9), which has a consonantal *wāw* marked by both “*shûreq*” and *pataḥ*. Accordingly, conjunctive *wāw* is frequently marked like *shûreq*. In these cases, it may have been realised as /u/ or /wu/.³¹

Shěwă retains both silent and vocalic functions. It appears in places where CA has *sukūn*, and also represents short /a/ in most places where it does not close a syllable. For example, see פָּקֵלְתִּי (*fā-qult*, “I said,” 2:14) and אֶלְמָגְרוּס (*al-maghrūs*, “planted,” 3:2). This vocalic *shěwă* as /a/ nearly always appears in unstressed syllables, while *pataḥ* occurs in syllables with stressed or long /a/, but this rule does not always hold. For example, for מֶלֶךְ (*malik*, “king,” 2:12), *shěwă* represents stressed /a/. The use of *shěwă* for /a/ also occurs in Bible manuscripts with “non-standard Tiberian” vocalisation,³² and probably reflects the Tiberian pronunciation of vocalic *shěwă* like *pataḥ* (i.e. /a/).³³ The *shěwă* sign may also indicate some “reduction” of the /a/ vowel, at least in certain contexts. For example, גָּמַעַת (*gamaʿt*, “I gathered,” 2:8) may reflect a form closer to *jamaʿt* than to CA *jamaʿtu*.³⁴ Moreover, the quality of vocalic *shěwă* can vary in different contexts. For example, in אֶלְמֻלֻךְ (*ʾal-mulūk*, “kings,” 2:8), טְהוּר (*ṭuhūr*,

29 In 5:10, 12:7, and 12:8 twice.

30 Khan, “Orthography and Reading,” p. 397; but see also, Blau, *Handbook*, p. 36.

31 For a similar phenomenon in Tiberian Hebrew, see Khan, *The Tiberian Pronunciation Tradition*, section 1.1.6.

32 For example, MS Cambridge, University Library, T-S AS 64.206 vocalises the definite article (-הַ) with *shěwă* (-הֶ). See Arrant, “Standard Tiberian.”

33 Khan, “Vocalized Judaeo-Arabic Manuscripts,” pp. 208–209; *idem*, *The Tiberian Pronunciation Tradition*, section 1.2.5.2.

34 See Lentin, “The Levant,” pp. 185–186.

“revelation,” 5:13), and כְּאַלְגֻיּוּם (*ka-ʾal-ghuyūm*, “like the clouds,” 12:2) *shēwā* represents /u/ in an unstressed, open syllable.³⁵

Shēwā also occurs once *inside* a word-final *hêt* (וְאַלְמֶרֶךְ, *u-ʾal-marāḥ*, “and merriment,” 3:4). This marking with an interior *shēwā* is a known feature in Hebrew manuscripts with “non-standard Tiberian” vocalisation, where it reinforces the full pronunciation of a weakened final guttural consonant. Additionally, it suggests that the scribe’s Judaeo-Arabic /ḥ/ was de-pharyngealised to /h/ in certain contexts, in this case at the end of a word-final syllable. Such de-pharyngealisation is only known in modern Arabic from peripheral dialects like Chadian and Nigerian,³⁶ but if it occurs here, then it may be due to influence from Aramaic.³⁷ Its appearance in this manuscript also suggests that this scribe had some familiarity with a type of non-standard Tiberian vowel pointing.³⁸

One of the most common variations in the manuscript is the raising of CA /a/ and /ā/ in certain phonetic contexts, a phenomenon known as *imāla* in Arabic grammar.³⁹ Both medial and final *imāla* are recorded in this manuscript, and both of these types of *imāla* are also known in dialects from the Levant, Egypt, Iraq, and the Maghreb from the early Islamic period onwards.⁴⁰ This phenomenon is attested in some early Judaeo-Arabic texts by the use of the *mater lectionis* letter *yod*,⁴¹ and is often marked by vowel dots in vocalised Judaeo-Arabic sources.⁴² This Ecclesiastes manuscript represents *imāla* with the Tiberian vowel signs *ḥîreq* and *ṣērê*. In positions where CA would have *tāʾ marbūṭa*, the manuscript has *ḥîreq* and *hê*. For example: לִלְגָה אֵלֶּה (*li-l-gahālih*, “to ignorance,” 2:12), אֵלְחִקְמִה (*al-ḥikmih*, “wisdom,” 2:12, twice), אֵלְזֻלְמִה (*al-ẓulmih*, “darkness,” 2:13), נְעֻמָּה (*niʿmih*, “comfort,” 5:10), בְּאַקִּיָּיִה (*bāqiyiyih*, “remaining,” 11:8), and אֵלְמֻזַּלְלִימִה (*al-muẓallimih*, “darkened,” 11:8). This tendency to raise final /a/ can be correlated with *imāla* of the feminine ending in many modern Arabic dialects.⁴³

35 Khan, “The Function of the Shewa Sign,” pp. 105–111.

36 Janet Watson, *The Phonology and Morphology of Arabic*, p. 18.

37 See Fassberg, *A Grammar of the Palestinian Targum Fragments*, p. 27.

38 For more on this feature, see Blapp, *The Non-Standard Tiberian Hebrew Language Tradition*, pp. 47–48; Arrant, “An Exploratory Typology;” Yeivin, *Keter*, p. 17; Morag, “The Vocalization of Codex Reuchlinianus,” p. 233.

39 Levin, “The Imāla in the Arabic Dialects,” pp. 1–2, XI11; Levin, “Imāla.”

40 Lentin, “The Levant,” pp. 180–181; Levin, “The Imāla in the Arabic Dialects,” pp. 62–78; al-Nassir, *Sībawayh the Phonologist*, pp. 91–103.

41 Khan, “Judaeo-Arabic,” pp. 150–151; Hopkins, “On Imāla of Medial and Final ā,” pp. 195–214.

42 Khan, “Vocalized Judaeo-Arabic Manuscripts,” p. 204.

43 Levin, “Imāla.”

Šērê represents *imāla* four times, including at least three times in places where CA has long /ā/ in an open syllable: מָתִי (*matē*, “when,” 5:10), אֶנִּיפָא (*ʿēniḡan*, “in the first place,” 12:7), and פִּאֲנִי (*fēniy^{an}*, “passing away,” 12:8). These instances of vowel raising are not lexical phenomena, but rather are conditioned by their phonological context, as פִּאֲנִי (*fēniy^{an}*, “passing away”) occurs in verse 12:8 alongside כְּאֵל־פִּאֲנִין (*ka-ʾal-fānīn*, “like those who pass away”). The fourth *šērê* appears where a lacuna allows only a cautious reconstruction of the entire word: {אֶנְמָא} (*ʿennamā*, “only,” 12:8). If this reconstruction is correct, then this form is probably a hypocorrection of the CA word *ʿinnamā*.⁴⁴

Another case of vowel raising occurs with the CA particle *man* (“who?”). It appears once as *min* with *hîreq* (וּמִן יִכּוֹן, *u-min yakūn*, “and who is,” 5:8), reflecting the use of the word as a relative pronoun (“whoever”). This example example with *hîreq* notably occurs in the context of a *yôd* in an adjacent syllable, which may have affected its vowel quality. The use of *min* for CA interrogative *man* is common to both Egyptian and Levantine varieties of modern Arabic,⁴⁵ and lexical *min* as a relative pronoun occurs in modern Egyptian.⁴⁶

The text uses a few Tiberian *hātēp* signs in places where CA has /a/ or /i/. *Hātēp pataḥ* occurs somewhat regularly, usually on *ʿayin* and *hêt*, including: אֶל־מִלְחָנָא (*u-al-mulḥānāt*, “female musicians,” 2:8), וְעֶזְמִת (*u-ʾəzūmt*, “and I became great,” 2:9), עָלִי (*ʾālā*, “upon,” 2:9, 2:13 twice, 2:26, 4:17, 5:12, 11:10), עֶלְמִת (*ʾālimt*, “I knew,” 2:14), עֶרְצָא (*ʾərad^{an}*, “judgement,” 2:14), עֶלְיָךְ (*ʾālayak*, “upon you,” 4:17, 12:2), עֶמֶל (*ʾāmal*, “labour,” 5:13, 5:14), הֶדְאֶתְךָ (*hādāthatak*, “your youth,” 11:9), אֶל־חַיָּא (*al-ḥāyāh*, “life,” 12:6), and חֶכְיָמָא (*ḥākīm^{an}*, “wise,” 12:9). However, it is not clear that the quality or quantity of *hātēp pataḥ* on these letters actually differed from that of CA *fatha* (/a/). Instead, the writer may have followed the Biblical Hebrew convention of avoiding vocalic *shēwā* on guttural consonants. *Hātēp pataḥ* also occurs twice on *ʾālep*: אֶגְגִּיד (*ʾāggid*, “I would find,” 2:25), אֶסְבִּיף (*ʾāsābif*, 12:12);⁴⁷ and once each on *tāw*, *kāp*, and *yôd*: מֻתְאַמֵּל (*mutʾāmil^{an}*, “contemplating,” 2:11), כְּדֹאךְ (*kādhāk*, “likewise,” 5:9), אֶנְתַּזְיִמְהָ (*yāntaḡimhā*, “he organises them,” 12:9).

Hātēp ségōl is a lexically-specific phenomenon, appearing only on the preposition *ʾilā* and its variations with pronominal suffixes. For example: אֶלְיָה (*ʾēlayyah*, “to him,” 4:17), אֶלְיָא (*ʾēlayya*, “to me,” 2:23 and 4:17), and [י]ֶלְא (*ʾēlā*, “to,

44 Khan, “Vocalized Judaeo-Arabic Manuscripts,” p. 206; *idem*, “Orthography and Reading,” p. 402. Compare T-S Ar.8.3 F16 verso: אֶנְמָא, *ʿannamā*.

45 Lentin, “The Levant,” p. 185; Hinds and Badawi, *A Dictionary of Egyptian Arabic*, p. 845.

46 Hinds and Badawi, *A Dictionary of Egyptian Arabic*, p. 835.

47 This word is probably a misspelling; see comments on transcription below.

towards,” 5:14). In all of these cases, *ḥāṭēp sēgōl* appears beneath an *ʾālep-lāmed* ligature, and it is impossible to say for sure that it does not instead represent *shēwā* on the *ʾālep* and *sēgōl* on the *lāmed*. If it does, then the expected pronunciation of אֵלַי (“to me”) would be *ʾaleyya* or something similar. These examples would then also be the only places where *sēgōl* appears in the Judaeo-Arabic text.⁴⁸

In contrast to dialectal forms, the vocalisation also reflects several apparent “hypocorrections,” where the writer attempted to “classicise” a perceived dialectal pronunciation of /i/ by replacing it with /a/, but failed to produce a true CA form.⁴⁹ For example: *ʾastahsinuh* (אֶסְתַּחֲסִינָה, “it deemed it beautiful,” 2:10) for *ʾistahsanahu*; *ba-ʾal-maysūr* (בְּאַלְמַיְסוּר, “at ease,” 5:11) for *bil-maysūri*; *fa-ʾiltimāsuh* (פִּאֲלִתְמַאסָה, “for his seeking,” 5:11) for *fa-timāsuhu*; *zaltuh* (זַלְתָּה, “I abandoned it,” 5:12) for CA *ziltuhu*; *ʾannahā* (אֲנָהּ, “indeed it/they,” 11:8) for *ʾinnahā*; *ka-ʾal-ghuyūm* (כְּאַלְגִּיּוּם, “like the clouds,” 12:2) for *kal-ghuyūm*; and *fī-ʾal ...* (... פִּיֵּאֵל, “in the ...,” 12:3) for *fil*.

The text also contains occasional “hypercorrections” where the writer uses a grammatical form when CA does not require it. For example, verse 2:26 has *bi-hargān* (בִּיהַרְגָּא, “with agitation”), marking a direct object with both *tanwīn alif* and *bi-*. Similarly, in verse 11:8, the CA word *ʾakthar* (“greater, more than”) appears as *ʾaktharān* (אַכְתָּרָא), apparently marked with *tanwīn* as the predicate of *takūn*, even though CA elative adjectives do not take *tanwīn*.

3.2 Consonants

The text is “classical” Judaeo-Arabic, generally matching the orthography of Classical Arabic with corresponding Hebrew letters.⁵⁰ The Arabic definite article is almost always written *ʾal* (with the two letters connected as a single ligature) where CA would have *al*, as well as in places where CA normally elides the initial *alif* with *hamzatu l-waṣl* (see hypocorrections above). There is one instance where the *lāmed* of the definite article is omitted before a *ḍād* (3:4: *la-ḍḍahk*, “for [the] laughter”), but otherwise it is always written, even with “sun letters.” Similarly, geminated Arabic letters are usually written only

48 Similar lexical specificity occurs in non-standard Tiberian bible manuscripts. For example, T-S NS 68.22 and T-S NS 78.47 have *shēwā* for *ḥāṭēp sēgōl* only on the *ʾālep* of the divine name (e.g., אֵלֹהֵי). See Arrant, “An Exploratory Typology.”

49 See Khan, “Vocalized Judaeo-Arabic Manuscripts,” pp. 205–206; *idem*, “Orthography and Reading,” pp. 400–401.

50 This type contrasts the earlier “phonetic” orthographic system, which saw use until the first half of the tenth century. Khan, “Judaeo-Arabic,” pp. 150–151; Blau and Hopkins, “On Early Judaeo-Arabic Orthography.”

once in Hebrew characters—sometimes marked with a *dāgēsh*—except for two cases which reduplicate the consonant: 2:11, אִנְנִי (*’innī*, “indeed I”); 12:9, אִלְלַף (*’allaf*, “he composed”).

There is one notable instance of consonantal interchange. In verse 3:1, מְחֻדָּר (*maḥdūr*) is probably intended as מְחֻדָּר (*maḥdūr*, “prepared, fixed”). This spelling may be a remnant of an earlier “phonetic” Judaeo-Arabic orthography, which used *dālet* to represent Arabic *ḍād*.⁵¹ Alternatively, it may indicate a loss of /d/ in certain contexts in the writer’s dialect.

The writer uses two types of diacritic dots to distinguish consonants: Tiberian *dāgēsh* and a single supralinear dot. These dots are used sporadically, but when they do appear, they distinguish specific pairs of letters.

The supralinear dot appears regularly to indicate *zā’* and *ḍād*, two consonants which do not have a phonetic equivalent in the Hebrew alphabet. A dot above ט distinguishes *zā’* from *tā’*, and a dot above צ distinguishes *ḍād* from *ṣād*. This convention follows a typical Judaeo-Arabic practice for indicating Arabic consonants that do not have Hebrew counterparts.⁵²

The use of *dāgēsh* conforms to the standard Tiberian practice, marking stops but not fricatives. Accordingly, כּ, דּ, פּ, and תּ correspond to the Arabic stops ب, ד, and ت, respectively, while כ, ד, and ת correspond to the Arabic fricatives ذ, خ,⁵³ and ث. The fricative reflex of כּ (/v/) and the stop reflex of פּ (/p/) have no Arabic equivalents, so those letters always represent ב and פ in the manuscript. There is also a single instance of *pê* with *rāfē* in verse 12:9 (אִלְלַף; *’allaf*, “he composed”), which presumably highlights the fricative pronunciation in that word. Then for *gîmel*, ג corresponds to the Arabic letter ج, while א corresponds to غ. This usage breaks from more common diacritical practices in Judaeo-Arabic, which typically mark *jîm* using the convention for marking Arabic phonemes that have no Hebrew equivalent (like *zā’* and *ḍād*). That is, they usually indicate the Arabic affricate *jîm* (/j/) using a *gîmel* with a diacritic dot either above or below it.⁵⁴ Instead, this manuscript uses *dāgēsh* to separate ج and غ in the same way as the other *bgdkft* pairs that have two Arabic equivalents. If the same pattern for those letters also holds for *gîmel* here, then it suggests the writer realised Judaeo-Arabic א as a voiced velar fricative (/gh/ or similar) and א as a voiced velar stop (/g/), and *not* like the CA palatal affricate

51 Khan, “Judaeo-Arabic,” p. 150; *idem*, “Orthography and Reading,” p. 397; Blau and Hopkins, “On Early Judaeo-Arabic Orthography.”

52 Khan, “Orthography and Reading,” p. 397.

53 e.g. כַּיֵּר (*khayr*, “good,” 2:24) and אִלְכַּיֵּט (*al-khayṭ*, “the thread,” 4:12).

54 Connolly, “Revisiting the Question of Ġim,” pp. 165, 168–169.

(/j/). This “*gīm*” reflex is a hallmark of modern Egyptian Arabic, and is also known to have occurred in Egypt between the eighth and twelfth centuries.⁵⁵

3.3 Summary

The Judaeo-Arabic of this translation reflects a fairly high register of medieval Arabic, which generally conforms to CA grammar and morphology, and also attempts to “classicise” some of its dialectal features. However, a few elements of the writer’s dialect have crept into the formal language of the text, including: the raising of *a*-vowels in certain contexts (*imāla*) and a likely realisation of the Arabic letter *jīm* as /g/. The *imāla* seen here is similar to many modern dialects, and does not contradict the Egypt-Palestine assessment of the manuscript’s palaeography. Then the /g/ reflex of *jīm* is a well-known feature of Egyptian Arabic, including during the early medieval period. These details indicate that the writer most likely spoke a variety of Egyptian Arabic. Given the dating of the palaeography and the fact that this manuscript is parchment from the Cairo Genizah, it is also probable that the writer lived in Egypt during the twelfth century.

4 Transcription and Translation

The following section contains a transcription of the manuscript. Portions in [square brackets] are reconstructed from damaged areas that still have some ink, but where either the vowels or consonants are not clear, often with the aid of ultraviolet or infrared microscopy. Those in {curly brackets} are not visible in the manuscript, but are reconstructed from the context of the contents. The actual size of the incipits is smaller than the main text, so we have transcribed them in a smaller font size. Beside the transcription is our translation of the Judaeo-Arabic text, produced as faithfully as possible within the limits of reasonable reconstruction. We have also included the Jewish Publication Society’s 1985 translation of Ecclesiastes,⁵⁶ as well as the text of the Leningrad codex from the Westminster Theological Seminary’s online edition (<http://www.tanach.us/Tanach.xml>). The rightmost column contains the line number in the manuscript, while the leftmost column contains the corresponding chapter and verse in Ecclesiastes.

55 Some Judaeo-Arabic manuscripts suggest it persisted in certain dialects until at least the sixteenth century; Connolly, “Revisiting the Question of Ġīm,” pp. 162–163, 178–179. See also, Behnstedt and Woidich, “The Formation of the Egyptian Area,” pp. 69–70.

56 Berlin, Brettler and Fishbane (eds), *The Jewish Study Bible*, pp. 1606–1622.

4.1 *Ar.53.12 F1 Recto*

| Verse | NJPS | Westminster Leningrad | Translation | Transcription | Line |
|-------|---|---|---|---|------|
| 2:8 | I further amassed silver and gold and treasures of | כִּנְסָתִי לִי גֶם־כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב וְסִגְלָת | I gathered silver and {gold} | כִּנְסָתִי לִי גֶם וְגִמְעַת פֶּצֶה וְזָהָב {בֶּא}..... | 1 |
| | kings and province; and I got myself male | מְלָכִים וְהַמְדִּינוֹת עָשִׂיתִי לִי שָׂרִים | of kings and cities, desirously; and {I acquired} ... fine {male} | אֶלְמְלוֹךְ וְאַלְמְדָּאִין רָאִגְבָּא וְאַתְכְּ {דַּת} ... {אֶלְמֶלְחָנִין} | 2 |
| | and female singers, as well as the luxuries of commoners— | וְשָׂרוֹת וְתַעֲנוּגֹת בְּנֵי הָאָדָם | and female musicians, and some of the remaining pleasures of man, | וְאַלְמֶלְחָנָת ⁵⁷ מְחֻסְנָא וּמִן מִלְאֲד ⁵⁸ אֶלְאֻנְסָא אֶלְבֶּאֱקִיא {ת} | 3 |
| | coffers and coffers of them. | שָׁדָה וְשָׁדוֹת: | from time to time. | חֵינָא וְאַחִינְאָנָא: וְגִדְלָתִי וְהוֹסֵפְתִּי וְעֵטְמָת פִּי דְאֲדָךְ | 4 |
| 2:9 | Thus, I | וְגִדְלָתִי | And I became great in that, | | |
| | gained more wealth than anyone before me in Jerusalem. | וְהוֹסֵפְתִּי מִכָּל שֶׁהָיָה לִפְנֵי בִירוּשָׁלַם | and I gained wealth beyond those who came before me, who were, in the house of peace, | וְזָדַת קִדְרִי אֵלַי {אֶל} דִּין קְבִלִי {כַּ} אֲנוּ פִּי דְאֲרֵא אֶלְסֶלֶם | 5 |
| | In addition, my wisdom remained with me: | אִף חֻכְמָתִי עִמָּדָה לִי: | great. And my wisdom was prepared brought together in | כְּבִרָא וְחֻכְמָתִי מְעֻדָּא {ד} {ה}..... ל.ל. ... {צ} מֵהָ פִּי | 6 |
| | I withheld from my eyes | וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר שָׁאֲלוּ עֵינַי | my actions. my sight | אֶפְעָאֲלִי: וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר {ק} טִרְפִּי | 7 |
| 2:10 | I withheld from my eyes nothing they asked for, and denied myself no enjoyment; | לֹא אֶצְלָתִי מֵהֶם לֹא־מִנְעָתִי אֶת־לִבִּי | anything it deemed beautiful it deemed nice; | שֵׁינָא אֶסְתַּחֲסֶנָּה {ח} אֶסְתַּחֲסֶנָּה | 8 |

57 The *nūn* in this word may have *qāmeṣ* instead of *pataḥ*.

58 This word is *ملاذ*, a relatively uncommon plural of *ملاذة* ("joy, pleasure, comfort"); Wehr, *The Hans Wehr Dictionary*, p. 1013; Kazimirski, *Dictionnaire Arabe-Français*, p. 985; Blau, *Dictionary*, p. 628.

(cont.)

| Verse | NJPS | Westminster Leningrad | Translation | Transcription | Line |
|-------|---|--|--|---|------|
| | rather, I got enjoyment out of all my wealth. | מִכָּל-שִׂמְחָה בִּי-לִבִּי שִׂמְחָה מִכָּל-עַמְלִי | rather, my heart was with that [and it] which was | בֵּל כָּאן קִלְבִּי בְּדָאד .....[וְהוּא] אֵלֶּדִי כָאן | 9 |
| | And that was all I got out of my wealth. | וְזוֹ-הִיא חֶלְקִי מִכָּל-עַמְלִי: | my share from all that | קִלְבִּי חֲטִי מִן כָּל מֵא.....א: וּפְנִיתִי אֲנִי חָם | 10 |
| 2:11 | | | Then, | | |
| | Then my thoughts turned to all the fortune my hands had built up, | וּפְנִיתִי אֲנִי בְּכָל-מַעֲשִׂי שָׁעֲשִׂי יָדַי | indeed, I turned in contemplation [of all that] ... I had built and what | אֲנִי תוֹנֶה מִתְאַמֵּלָא [כָּל מֵא] ... צִנְעָתָה ⁵⁹ וּמ[א] ⁶⁰ | 11 |

Line 1: The vocalisation of גַּמַּעַת may reflect a dialectal pronunciation of the 1cs perfect verb as *jamaʿt*, although vocalic *shěwă* tends to represent /a/ in most of the manuscript.

Line 2: The *shěwă* in אֵל־מְלוֹךְ (*al-mulūk*, “the kings”) appears to represent /u/ in an unstressed, open syllable.

Line 2: The translator probably chooses *madīna* (“city;” pl. *madāʿin*) here because it shares a root with the word *mēdīnā* (“province;” pl. *mēdīnōt*) from the Hebrew verse, even though they have different lexical meanings. This word, as well as a few others, are left unvocalised, seemingly at random.

Line 3: אֲלִבְאִיָּא (*al-bāqīyāti*, “the remaining”) apparently ends with a *ḥûreq*, although it is not clear why the vocaliser would put a case vowel here and nowhere else. It may indicate an epenthetic vowel rather than a grammatical case.

Line 5: The pointing on זִידַת suggests a pronunciation of the 1cs perfect form as *zīdat*, *zīdət*, or *zīdt*.

Line 5: There is a miniature *sāmek* or *mēm* on the left side above the *rêsh* in אֲ[ךְ] קִדְרָא (*qadr^{an}*, “wealth”). It may be a correction to make this phrase וְזִידַת קִדְרָא, “and I gained some amount.”

Line 5: There may be a *qāmeṣ* beneath the *ālep* in אֲ[ל] (ʿ*olladhīna?*), but it is difficult to be sure. It would be the only instance of *qāmeṣ* in the manuscript,

59 It appears that the scribe began the *qibbûṣ* here too close to the *tāw*, and then wrote the full three dots under the erroneous first.

60 There is an oblique stroke above the *mēm* in this word.

and does not match the expected pronunciation of *ʿalladhīna* or *ʿelladhīna*. The scribe may have added a *qāmeṣ* as an orthoepic reminder to separate the beginning of this word from the final vowel of the previous word (i.e. *ʾālayya*).

Line 5: The translator glosses ירוּשָׁלַם (“Jerusalem”) as דָּאָר אַלסָלָם (*dār al-salām*, “the house of peace”), using a defective spelling (possibly, *al-salam*).

Line 9: א[והוּ] (*wa-huwā?* “and he”) may be the Hebrew pronoun הוּא, or a *plene* spelling of the Arabic pronoun like هُوَا.⁶¹

Line 11: The scribe reduplicates the geminated *nūn* in אַנְנִי (*ʾinnī* or *ʾinnanī*, “indeed I”), likely on analogy with the Hebrew forms הִנְנִי (*hinnennī*) and הִנְנִי (*hinēnī*).

Line 11: The 1cs perfect verb שָׁנְעָתָה (*ṣanaʿtuh*, “he made it”) appears to be marked like the CA 1cs perfect verb (*faʿaltu*), but the final /u/ in the Judaeo-Arabic is actually part of the 3ms pronominal object suffix. This suffix appears regularly as *-uh*.⁶²

4.2 Ar.53.12 Fī Verso

| Verse | NJPS | Westminster Leningrad | Translation | Transcription | Line |
|--------------------|--|---|--|---|------|
| | to the wealth I had acquired and won— and oh, | וּבְעֵמֶל שְׂעֻמָּלָתִי לְעֵשׂוֹת וְהִנֵּה | what of it I had made. I found that all of it was |מָה מְנָה פְעֻלָּתָהּ פּוֹגְדָת אֶלְכֵּל מְנָה | 1 |
| | it was all futile and pursuit of wind; there was no real value | הַכֹּל הִבֵּל וְרֵעוּת רוּחַ וְאֵין יִתְרוֹן | vanity, without fail, nothing but the glimmer of dawn. And what of it is a certainty, | ...[.]בְּטֻלָּאן לְאַבְד אֵילָא וּמָה מְנָה יְקִינָא | 2 |
| | under the sun! | תַּחַת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ: | persisting under the sun, debasing cre- ation? | תַּחַת אֱלֹשֶׁמֶס בְּאַקִּיָּא יְדוּס כְּאִינָא: וּפְנִיתִי אֲנִי וְחִינִיד | 3 |
| 2:12 ⁶³ | | | Then | | |
| | My thoughts also turned to appraising wisdom | וּפְנִיתִי אֲנִי לְרִאּוֹת חֻכְמָה | I turned to considering wisdom and praise- worthy deeds | אֶקְבֵּלָת נְאֻטָּרָא פִי אַלְחֻכְמָה וּמַחְמוּדָת אַלְאַעְמָאֵל | 4 |

61 Khan, “Orthography and Reading,” p. 399.

62 For example, see 2:12, 2:23, 2:24, 5:10, 5:11, 5:12, and 12:3.

63 JPS reverses the order of the two sentences in this verse “for clarity.” We have switched them back to demonstrate the differences between the versions of this passage.

(cont.)

| Verse | NJPS | Westminster Leningrad | Translation | Transcription | Line |
|-------|---|--|--|--|------|
| | and madness and folly. For what | וְהוֹלָלוֹת וְסִכְלוֹת כִּי \| מָה | and to scrutinising ignorance and repul- sive acts, wanting to know | ומתצפחא ללגהאלה ומדמומאת אלאפעאל מסתעלמא | 5 |
| | will the man be like who will succeed | הָאָדָם שֶׁיָּבֹוא אַחֲרָי | about he who following the approval of the | בְּאִיָּה מֵא.....[לה] תִּאבְעָא רְצָא אֵל | 6 |
| | the one who is ruling over what was built up long ago? | הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת אֲשֶׁר־בָּנָה עָשׂוּהוּ: | king and | מֶלֶךְ ו..... ⁶⁴ [ל]לְחַכְמָה כִּי דָאֵךְ | 7 |
| 2:13 | I found that | וְרֵאִיתִי אֲנִי | ... regarding wisdom: in that, | | |
| | Wisdom is superior to folly As light is supe- rior to darkness; | שֵׁישׁ יִתְרוֹן לְחַכְמָה מִן־הַסִּכְלוֹת כִּי־תִתְרוֹן הָאֹר מִן־הַחֹשֶׁךְ: | it outranks {igno- rance}.... outranks darkness. | עֲלִי אֲלֵךְ {הֵאֱלָה}..... עֲלִי אֲלֻטְלָמָה חֵאֱלָא | 8 |
| 2:14 | A wise man has his eyes in his head, | הֵחֱכֵם עֵינָיו בְּרֹאשׁוֹ | And I found look- ing straight ahead of him, while the | הֵחֱכֵם עֵינָיו וּוּגַד {ת}..... [א]מֵאמָה נִאֲטָרָא וְאֵל | 9 |
| | Whereas a fool walks in darkness. But I also realized that the same fate | וְהַכְסִיל בַּחֹשֶׁךְ הוֹלֵךְ וַיִּדְעֵתִי גַם־אֲנִי שֶׁמִּקְרָה אֶחָד | ignorant is in {dark- ness}.... I learned for certain that a single judgment, | גֵּאֵהֵל כִּי אֲלֻטְ [ל] {מָה} עֲלֵמָתִי יִקִּינָא אֵן עֲרֵצָא | 10 |
| | awaits them both. | קִרָּה אֶת־כֻּלָּם: | without fail, but then I voiced a refusal. | וְאִחְדָא לֹא בְד... [רָצָה] [מֵא] פִקְלֵת ⁶⁵ חִינִיד מִנְכְּרָא: | 11 |
| 2:15 | | | | | |

Line 1: The pronominal suffix at the end of פְּעֻלְתָּהּ (*fa'altuhi*, "I made it") is marked with *hîreq*. It may indicate a defective spelling of the feminine pronominal suffix that has undergone some dialectal vowel raising, or it may be the equivalent of a *mappiq*, indicating that the *hê* is part of a pronominal suffix.

⁶⁴ The incipit for verse 2:13 was most likely in this lacuna.

⁶⁵ There is a dot above this *tāw* that looks like a *hōlem*, but it is unlikely that the scribe placed it there intentionally.

Line 1: *Mappiq* occurs twice in this line in the *hé* of מִנֶּה (“of it, from it”), but almost nowhere else in the text.

Line 2: Compare לֹא־בֹדֶר (*lābbud* or *lā bud*, “without fail”) with CA *lā budd* (“without fail”). There is no indication of gemination on the final Judaeo-Arabic consonant, but the scribe also does not mark gemination consistently elsewhere.

Line 2: The word אֵילָא (*ʾylāʾ*?) is unvocalised, but it appears to be an Aramaic noun. The translator uses it to gloss the Hebrew word רוּחַ (“wind”), apparently drawing on an idiomatic usage of אֵילָא as “the first glimmer of dawn,” ultimately based on the Hebrew idiom אֵילֵת הַשָּׁחַר, meaning “the light of dawn.”⁶⁶ This usage occurs again in 2:26 and 4:16.

Line 2: We have translated וְיִמָּא as an interrogative particle, but it may be meant as a particle of negation, equivalent to the Hebrew וְאֵין. If this is the case, then the line could be translated as “nothing certain remains under the sun.”

Line 3: כאֵינָא here refers specifically to the “created” or “existing” world, which aligns with the translator’s treatment of life as a period of “persisting” (בִּאֲקִיָּא) before death.

Line 5: In CA, the form-*v* participle מִתְצַפְחָא (*mutaṣaffah^{an}*, “scrutinising”) indicates close examination.⁶⁷ However, the ṣ-*f*-*h* root is also related to “forgiveness” in certain varieties of Arabic,⁶⁸ so a more accurate translation may be “I turned to considering wisdom and praiseworthy deeds, and to *forgiving* ignorance and repulsive acts.”

4.3 L-G Ar.I.150 Fi Recto

| Verse | NJPS | Westminster Leningrad | Translation | Transcription | Line |
|-------|--|---|---|---|------|
| 2:22 | For what does a man get for all the toiling and worrying he does under the sun? | כִּי מַה־הָיָה לְאָדָם בְּכָל־עֲמָלוֹ וּבְרַעְיוֹן לִבּוֹ שֶׁהוּא עֹמֵל תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ: | ... under the sun his heart, struggling. | תַּחַת אֵלֶשְׁמַס | 1 |
| | | | | קִלְבָּה מְנַאֲזָעָא: כִּי כ{ל}..... | 2 |
| 2:23 | All his days | כִּי כָל־יָמָיו | ..... |  |  |

66 See the CAL entry on אֵילָא: <http://cal.huc.edu/oneentry.php?lemma=%29ylh%232%20N&cits=all>.

67 Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, p. 1695.

68 Hinds and Badawi, *A Dictionary of Egyptian Arabic*, pp. 504–505.

(cont.)

| Verse | NJPS | Westminster Leningrad | Translation | Transcription | Line |
|-------|--|---|---|--|------|
| | his thoughts are grief and heartache, and even at night | מְכַאֲבִים וְכַעַס עֵינָיו גַּם-בַּלַּיְלָה | while sorrows are in view and | בְּאֵלֹאֲזַנָּע מִשְׁאָרָף .....[ו] | 3 |
| | his mind has no respite. | לֹא-שָׁכַב לְבוֹ | turning away, so his heart does not | מִצָּר[ה] פָּקְלָהּ לֹא ⁶⁹ | 4 |
| | That too is futile! | גַּם-זֶה הִבֵּל הוּא: | passing away {is turned} towards me. | יְכוֹן אֵלַי אֶלְפָּנָא מִנְ[צָר]{פ}..... ⁷⁰ | 5 |
| 2:24 | There is nothing worthwhile for a man but to eat and drink | אִין-טוֹב בְּאָדָם שִׁיאֵכֵל וְשָׁתָה | ... for a man who per- sists in what | לֹאֲנִסְאָן בְּאִקְיָא [בְּמ]א[י] ⁷¹ | 6 |
| | and afford himself enjoyment with his means. And even that, | וְהִרְאָה אֶת-נַפְשׁוֹ טוֹב בְּעִמְלּוֹ גַּם-זֶה | from the benefit in his likeness to himself | מִן כִּיר בְּמִתְלָה אֵלַי נִפְסָה מִגֵּ..... | 7 |
| | I noted, comes from God. | רָאִיתִי אֲנִי כִי מִיָּד הָאֱלֹהִים הִיא: | I found it completely in what is from | וּגְדַתָּה בְּאִמְלָא פִי מֵא יְכוֹן [מִן]..... ⁷² | 8 |
| 2:25 | For who eats | כִּי מִי יֵאָכֵל | So I never found, in my time, anyone who eats ... | אֵד כְּנֵת לֹא אֶגְדִּי פִי זְמָאֲנִי [מִן יֵאָכֵל]{ל} ... | 9 |
| | and who enjoys but myself? | וְמִי יְחוּשׁ חוּץ מִמֶּנִּי: | than me, nor hastens toward {a desire} | מִנִּי וְלֹא מִסְאָרְעָא [אֵלַי] מִ[רָא]{ד} ..[כִּי] לְאָדָם ⁷³ | 10 |
| 2:26 | To the man, namely, who pleases Him, | כִּי לְאָדָם שְׂטוֹב לְפָנָיו | Also, that {God} restores | [שְׂטוֹב] [וּא]ן אֵל[ל]{ה} [מִצְלָח] אֵל ק[...]. | 11 |

69 There is a *hîreq* below the *pê* in this word, probably marking an epenthetic vowel that separates it from the following *pê*.

70 The incipit for 2:24 was most likely in this lacuna.

71 There is a dot above the *mêm* in this word.

72 The incipit for 2:25 was most likely in this lacuna.

73 Incipit for 2:26 reconstructed based on the following line.

4.4 *L-G Ar.I.150 Fi Verso*

| Verse | NJPS | Westminster Leningrad | Translation | Transcription | Line |
|-------|---|---|---|---|------|
| | He has given the wisdom and shrewdness | נָתַן חִכְמָה וְדַעַת | who is before Him, completely |[נ] אַמֵּאמָה צֵאלְחָא | 1 |
| | to enjoy himself; | וְשִׂמְחָה | and celebration according to his satisfaction; |[ע] וְאַלְאֲחָפָאֵל עָלֵי רְצֵאנָה | 2 |
| | and to him who displeases, He has given the urge to gather and amass—only for handing on to one who is pleasing to God. | וְלַחֹסֵא נָתַן עֲנִין לְאַסּוּף וּלְכָנוֹס לְתֵת לְטוֹב לְפָנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים | with agitation, and what is cheated |[חָא] בִּהְרָגָא וּמָא ⁷⁴ יִי[ת]ר | 3 |
| | That too is futile and pursuit of wind. | גַּם־זֶה הֶבֶל וְרֵעוּת רֵיחַ: |the futility is hastening after the glimmer of dawn. |לְבִטְלָאֵן סְרִיעָא אֵילָא: | 4 |
| 3:1 | A season is set for everything, a time for every experience under heaven: | לְכָל זְמַן וְעֵת לְכָל־חֶפֶץ תַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם: (ס) | {for everything under} the sun there is a time prepared, and for every | ⁷⁵ {לְכָל שִׁי תַחַת} [אַל]שְׁמַס וְקַת מְחֻדָּר ⁷⁶ וּלְכָל | 5 |
| | | | is enumerated. |{מ}עֲדוּ[ד]: עַת לְלֵדָת פּוּקַת לְלִבְקָא | 6 |
| 3:2 | A time for being born | עַת לְלֵדָת | A time for persisting | | |
| | and a time for dying, A time for planting and a time for uprooting the planted; | וְעֵת לְמוֹת עַת לִטְעַת וְעֵת לַעֲקוֹר נָטוּעַ: | a time for planting, and a time for pulling up what is planted; | [וּקַת] לְ[ג]רְס וּקַת לְקַלַּע אֶלְמִגְרוּס: | 7 |
| 3:3 | A time for slaying and a time for healing, A time for tearing down and a time for building up; | עַת לְהַרְגֹּג וְעַת לְרַפּוּא עַת לְפָרוֹץ וְעַת לְבָנוֹת: | {a time} for killing and a time for standing down; and a time for building. | ⁷⁷ {וּקַת} לְלִקְחָל וּקַת לְתַרְבֵּה וּקַת לְלִבְנָא | 8 |

74 It is not clear that there is a space between this word and the next.

75 The incipit for 3:1 was probably in this lacuna.

76 Read *maḥḍūr*.

77 The incipit for 3:3 was probably in this lacuna.

(cont.)

| Verse | NJPS | Westminster Leningrad | Translation | Transcription | Line |
|-------|---|--|--|--|------|
| 3:4 | A time for weeping and a time for laugh- ing, | עַת לְבִכּוּת וְעַת לְשִׂחוּק | A time for weeping and a time for laugh- ing; | [עַת] לְבִכּוּת וְ[בִ]ת וְ[קַת] לְלִבְכָּא וְ[קַת] לְצַחֲד | 9 |
| | A time for wailing and a time for danc- ing; | עַת סְפֹד וְעַת רְקוֹד: | and a time for dancing and merri- ment. | {וְ} קַת לְרִקֶּץ וְאַלְמֶרֶחַ | 10 |
| 3:5 | A time for throwing stones and a time for gathering stones, A time for embracing and a time for shun- ning embraces; | עַת לְהַשְׁלִיךְ אֲבָנִים וְעַת כְּנוֹס אֲבָנִים עַת לְחַבֹּק וְעַת לְרַחֵק מִחֻבָּק: | gemstones ... [for gathering them] | ק..... ⁷⁸ [רִו] [אַל] גְּוָאֶהֶר ... [לגמעהא] [ארת.] ... | 11 |

Line 2: The **צ** in רִצְאָנָה (*raḏānih*) does not have a diacritical dot, but it seems that it should be read as **ض**. Additionally, a *ḥîreq* clearly precedes the final ה. If this word follows the trends for *tā' marbūṭa* and 3ms pronominal suffixes in the text, then it should be read as رَضَانَة, although we cannot find this Arabic form attested elsewhere. If instead it is رَضَانَه, then this possessive suffix is marked differently from the majority of other instances (*-ih* instead of *-uh*), and may suggest some influence from the CA genitive case ending.

Line 6: The translator glosses the Hebrew לָלֶדֶת here as לְלִבְקָא (*li-l-baqā*), indicating a time “to remain” or “to persist” rather than “to be born.” This word choice is again consistent with their idea of life as a time for “persisting” until death.

Line 11: The *hē* of אַל[גְּוָאֶהֶר] (*al-gawāhir*, “gemstones”) is superscripted, apparently as a correction to the initial spelling.

78 The incipit for 3:5 was probably in this lacuna.

4.5 *L-G Ar.I.15o F2 Recto*

| Verse | NJPS | Westminster Leningrad | Translation | Transcription | Line |
|-------|---|--|--|--|------|
| 4:12 | Also, if one attacks, two can stand up to him. A | וְאִם־יִתְקַפּוּ הָאֲחֵד הַשְּׁנַיִם יַעֲמִדוּ נִגְדּוֹ | ... two {before him} | אַל־תִּנָּאֵן אִמְ{אמה}..... | 1 |
| | threefold cord is not readily bro- ken! | וְהַחוּט׃ הַמְשֻׁלָּשׁ לֹא בְמַהֲרָה יִנְתָּק׃ | like the thread when | כֹּאֲלֵכִיט אֲדָא .[תב.]..... | 2 |
| | | | its cord. | חֲבֻלָּה׃ טוֹב ילֵד] [מס] וּאֲ[עֵל]{ם אֵן}..... | 3 |
| 4:13 | Better a poor but wise youth than an old but | טוֹב יֶלֶד מְסָבִי וְחָכָם | So {know that}..... being a virtuous wretch | כֹּאֵן מְסָבִינָא כִּי־רָא | 4 |
| | foolish king who no longer has the sense to heed warn- ings. | מֶמְלֶכֶךְ זָקֵן וְכִסְלִי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדַע לְהִזָּהֵר עוֹד׃ | a powerful king when he is | מְלָכָא מְבִינָא אֲד כֹּאֵן..... ⁷⁹ | 5 |
| 4:14 | For the former can emerge from a dun- geon to become king; while the latter, even if born | | | | |
| | to kingship, can become a pauper. | כִּי־מִבֵּית הַסּוּרִים יֵצֵא לְמֶלֶכֶךְ כִּי גַם בְּמַלְכוּתוֹ נוֹלַד רָשׁ׃ | descent, and he may not receive a warning | חֲדָרָא וְלֹא יִקְבֹּל אֲ[י]ד־אֲרָא ⁸⁰ | 6 |
| | | | However, by bringing together, indeed, the staff | מַע דְּאֲדָב בְּגַמְ[ע] [א]ן אֵל[עצא]..... | 7 |
| | | | his king {is}.... | וּאֲשׁ[...דא]ד[ד] מַלְכָּה יב{וין}.... | 8 |

79 The incipit for 4:14 was probably in this lacuna, but the Judaeo-Arabic arrangement differs drastically from the Hebrew.

80 There is a dot above the *nūn* in this word.

(cont.)

| Verse | NJPS | Westminster Leningrad | Translation | Transcription | Line |
|-------|--|--|-------------|--|------|
| 4:15 | [However,] I reflected about all the living who walk under the sun with that youth- ful successor who steps into his place. | רִאִיתִי אֶת-כָּל-הַחַיִּים הַמְהֻלְכִים תַּחַת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ עִם הַיָּלֵד הַשְׁנִי אֲשֶׁר יַעֲמִד בַּחֲתָנּוֹ: | | הא...[ראיתי את כל החיים]...דא ⁸¹ | 9 |
| | | | | טג..... | 10 |
|  |  |  |  | ..... | 11 |

Line 7: Here the translator may be playing off the contrast between *jam*^c (gathering, bringing together) and the phrase *shaqq al-‘aṣā*—literally, “splitting the staff”—an idiom which refers to a division within a tribe or the splitting off of a person from a larger group.⁸² Note that later (12:8) they use *al-gāmi*^c (lit. “the gatherer,” “the one who brings together”) to gloss the Hebrew *Qōhelet*.

4.6 L-G Ar.1.15o F2 Verso

| Verse | NJPS | Westminster Leningrad | Translation | Transcription | Line |
|-------|---|--|---|---|------|
| 4:16 | Unnumbered are the multitudes | אֵין-קֶץ לְכָל-הָעָם | ... they ... without end |[עו] בְּלֹא נְהִיאָה | 1 |
| | of all those who preceded them; and | לְכָל אֲשֶׁר-יָהִיָּה לִפְנֵיהֶם גַּם | then from a king |[מ..] [ל] דֹּאדָךְ מִן מֶלֶךְ | 2 |
| | later generations will not acclaim him either. For that too is | הָאֲחֵרִים לֹא יִשְׁמְחוּ-בּוֹ כִּי-גַם-זֶה | they are joyful, and that all of that is not |[מ] רַחוּן וְאֵין כָּל דֹּאדָךְ לֹא | 3 |

81 The scribe wrote this incipit as two lines, taking up some of the interlinear space between lines 9 and 10.
82 See Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, p. 2068.

(cont.)

| Verse | NJPS | Westminster Leningrad | Translation | Transcription | Line |
|--------------------|---|---|--|---|------------------|
| | futile and pursuit of wind. | הֶבֶל וְרַעְיוֹן רוּחַ: | the glimmer of dawn. | {אִי} [ל] אֶ: שְׁמֵר רִגְלֶךָ פָּכֹן אֶלְאֵן | 4 |
| 4:17 ⁸³ | Be not overeager to go to the House of God: more acceptable is obedience than the offering of fools, for they know nothing [but] to do wrong. | שֹׁמֵר רִגְלֶיךָ [רִגְלֶיךָ] כְּאִשֶּׁר תִּלְךָ אֶל-בֵּית הָאֱלֹהִים וְקִרְבֹּב לְשִׁמְעַת מִתַּת הַכֹּסְאִים זָבַח כִּי-אֵינָם יוֹדְעִים לַעֲשׂוֹת רָע: | Now be being wary {of} overstepping, and it is seeking nearness to Him, but to me so do not always make the people for yourself as a guard against harm ... | {מִן} אֶלְכֶּטָא מְחִתְרָסָא וּכְאֵנַת לְלִקְרַבָּא אֱלֵיָה מִלְתְּמָסָא וְאֱלֵי פְּלֵא תִנְעַן [ל] לְנָאס דְּאִימָא עֲלִיד דְּאִירָה עֲלֵי צֶרֶךְ | 5 6 7 8 |
| 5:1 | Keep your mouth from being rash, and let not your throat be quick to bring forth speech before God. For God is in heaven and you are on earth; that is why your words should be few. | אֶל-תְּבַהֵל עַל-פִּיךָ וְלִבְךָ אֶל-יִמְהָר לְהוֹצִיא דְּבָר לְפָנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים כִּי הָאֱלֹהִים בַּשָּׁמַיִם וְאַתָּה עַל-הָאָרֶץ עַל-כֵּן יְהִי דְּבָרֶיךָ מְעַטִּים: | So in your speech, be an outburst | ⁸⁴ [פ] כֹּן פִּי קוֹלֶךְ] א [ל]... אַמְ..... גְּצֵבָה | 9 10 11 |

Line 6: קרְבָּא is probably an Aramaic noun (*qurbā*, “nearness”), and corresponds to וְקִרְבֹּב in the Hebrew text.

Line 7: דְּאִימָא here may reflect a dialectal shift of the CA glottal stop to /y/ (*dāyim^{an}*, “always”),⁸⁵ although in classical Judaeo-Arabic orthography a *yôd* can represent any CA *hamza* with a seat of *yā’*.

83 The original Judaeo-Arabic likely had more text here than would be necessary for a literal translation.

84 The incipit for 5:1 was probably in this lacuna.

85 Blau, *Handbook*, pp. 32–33.

Line 8: דַּאִירָה (*dāyirih*) is literally “a circle,” but here refers to the people who surround and protect a prince.⁸⁶ Note also the preceding comment on דַּאִימָא.

Line 8: עֲלִיךְ (*‘ālayak*) indicates a dialectal form of the 2ms pronominal suffix, -ak.

4.7 T-S Ar.53.12 F2 Recto

| Verse | NJPS | Westminster Leningrad | Translation | Transcription | Line |
|-------|---|--|---|---|------|
| 5:8 | Thus the greatest advantage in all the land is his: he controls a field that is cultivated. | וְיִתְרוֹן אֶרֶץ בְּכָל הָיָא [הוּא] מֶלֶךְ לְשִׁדָּה נְעֻבָד: is | ... of all than an excel- lent king, and whoever is | ...גְּמִיעָא מִן מֶלֶךְ פֶּאצֵּל וּמִן יְכוֹן..... | 1 |
| 5:9 | A lover of money never has his fill | אֶהָב כֶּסֶף לֹא יִשְׂבֵּעַ | Know that the lover of money | אֶהָב כֶּסֶף וְאֶעֱלֵם אֲנִי מִחֵב אֶלְמָא ל ט ... | 2 |
| | of money, nor a lover of wealth | כֶּסֶף וּמִי־אֶהָב בְּהֶמֶן לֹא | seeks to increase his money; and that likewise a lover of it | יִסְתַּכְתֵּר מִן מֵאֲלָה וְאֵין בְּדָאד מִחֵבָה ת[נ] מ[א] ר... | 3 |
| | his fill of income. That too is | תְּבוּאָה גְּסֻזָּה | to put it at his disposal; and that all of that will certainly, without fail, | יִסְתַּתֵּה מִן חֵלָה וְאֵין גְּמִיעַ דָּאד יִקְיֵא לֹא בִּד אֵין | 4 |
| | futile. | הִבֵּל: | pass away; | יְכוֹן פֶּאנִיָּא: בְּרִבּוּת הַטּוֹבָה וְאֵנְד אֶלְדִּי מִתִּי תִכְתֵּר בְּמִתְלָה | 5 |
| 5:10 | As his substance increases, | בְּרִבּוּת | and that you are one who, just as you increase | | |
| | so do those who consume it; what, then, | הַטּוֹבָה רִבּוֹ אוֹכְלֶיהָ וּמֵה־כִּשְׁרוֹן לְבַעֲלֶיהָ כִּי | luxury, so too does its consumption increase one of them, then, | נַעֲמָה יִכְתֵּר מִתַּאכְלָהָ [פ.ל] ...אֶחָדָהָ חֵינִיד | 6 |
| | does the success of its owner amount to but feasting his eyes? | אִסְרֵאִית [רְאוּת] עֵינָיו: | is itself righteousness, and and successes. | נִפְסָה צִלְאֲחָא וּלֹא[נ]..... וְאֶפְלֲאֲחָא: | 7 |
| 5:11 | A worker's sleep is sweet, | מִתּוֹקָה שְׁנַת הָעֶבֶד | And also, that its sweetness is to of the builder | מִתּוֹקָה שְׁנַת וְאֵין עֲדָבָה [ל] ע אֶלְצֶאנַע | 8 |

86 See Kazimirski, *Dictionnaire Arabe-Français*, p. 747.

(cont.)

| Verse | NJPS | Westminster Leningrad | Translation | Transcription | Line |
|-------|--|-------------------------------------|--|--|------|
| | whether he has much or little to eat; | אִם-מְעַט וְאִם-הֶרֶבָּה יֵאָכֵל | who is at ease, content in | מֵא כֹאן בְּאַלְמִיסוֹר פִּי מ ... [ל] קֹאנֵעַ | 9 |
| | but the rich man's abundance | וְהַשָּׁבֵעַ לְעֶשִׂיר | As for the wealthy man who generally his habit, | פֶּאמָא אֶלְמוֹסֶר אֶלְדִּי [ת] כְּתִי87.....עֵאם עֲאֲדָתָה | 10 |
| | doesn't let him sleep. | אֵינְנוּ מְנִיחַ לוֹ לִישׁוֹן: | his seeking is thus cer- tain, not ... being well fulfilled. | פֶּאֱלֶתְמֵאסָה כְּדֵא יְקִינֵא גִיר תֵּא ... מְסִתּוּפִי ט[יב]א | 11 |

Line 2: The vocalisation of אֶעֱלַם (*ʾaʿlam*) suggests it is a 1cs imperfect verb equivalent to CA *ʾaʿlamu* (“I know”). However, we suspect that this word is actually an imperative verb, equivalent to CA *iʿlam*. Similar use of the imperative of *ʿalama* is a common framing device for beginning new sections in medieval treatises, and the translator was likely imitating that structure here. Then the *pataḥ* on the *ʾālep* is probably a pseudo-classical correction.⁸⁸

4.8 T-S Ar.53.12 F2 Verso

| Verse | NJPS | Westminster Leningrad | Translation | Transcription | Line |
|-------|---|---|---|---|------|
| 5:12 | Here is a grave evil I have observed under the sun: | יֵשׁ רָעָה חוּלָה רְאִיתִי תַּחַת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ | Consider the enormity of evil which I have seen under {the sun} |[ול]ה וְאַעֲטֵם שְׂרָא רְאִיתָה תַּחַת {אֶלְשֵׁמֶס} | 1 |
| | riches hoarded by their owner | עֲשֹׂר שְׁמוֹר לְבָעָלָיו | a leftover which angers its owner exces- sively | ...סֵאֲרָא יַחֲפֵט89 עָלִי צִאחָבָה מֵאַגְלָא | 2 |

87 The beginning of this word appears to be אֶל overwritten with ת.

88 See Khan, “Vocalized Judaeo-Arabic Manuscripts,” pp. 204–206.

89 One of only a few unvocalized words, which seems odd given the ambiguity of this sentence. Read as form IV, *yuhfiʕ* (“it angers, annoys”).

(cont.)

| Verse | NJPS | Westminster Leningrad | Translation | Transcription | Line |
|-------|--|--|--|--|------|
| | to his misfortune, | לְרַעְתּוֹ: | relinquish it, and at a time of revelation, I abandoned it. | א.ח. ... פֹּתָהּ וְאוֹאֵן טְהוֹר וְלִתָּהּ: וְאֵבֵד הָעֵשׂוּ תָם ⁹⁰ | 3 |
| 5:13 | | | Then | | |
| | in that those riches are lost in some unlucky | וְאֵבֵד הָעֵשֶׂר הֵהוּא בְּעֵינָן | one from prosper- ity will lose it, for some reprehensible reason—loaning it or in a loathsome | יְהִלֵּךְ דָּאֵךְ מִן יִסְאָר בְּסִבָּב מִדְּמוּס ⁹¹ יִרְכָּבָה אוֹ עֵמֶל | 4 |
| | venture; and if he begets a son, | רַע וְהוֹלִיד בֶּן | venture—squandering it. Also, if he has a son, then that son | מִסְכּוּט יַחְתֵּק בָּהּ פֶּאֶן יּוֹלֵד אֲבִנָּא יִכֹּן דָּאֵךְ מִן אֲבִן | 5 |
| | he has nothing in hand. | וְאֵין בִּידּוֹ מְאוּמָּה: | will not come {clearly}, {but rather} is concealed from him. | לֹא גִיד מִנָּה טָא {הִרָא} {אֵלֵא} {ב} אֵטְנָא: כֹּאשֶׁר יֵצֵא תָם {פֶּהוּ} ⁹² | 6 |
| 5:14 | | | Then, | | |
| | As he came out of his mother's womb, | כְּאֶשֶׁר יֵצֵא מִבֶּטֶן אִמּוֹ עָרוֹם | like how naked, likewise | פְּכֻמָּא [...] עֶאֱרִיא פְּכֻדָּאֵךְ | 7 |
| | so must he depart at last, naked as he came. | יָשׁוּב לָלֶכֶת כְּשָׁבָא | he will return to .....—in what he has amassed in excess, | יִרְגַע אֶל [י] [א] לֹא יִגִּד ⁹³ פִּימָא יִתּוּזְדָּה | 8 |
| | He can take nothing of his wealth to carry with him. | וּמְאוּמָּה לֹא יִשָּׂא בְּעֵמְלוֹ שִׁילֵךְ בִּידּוֹ: | from righteous work the gathering of his hands—from that, he will not find | מִן עֵמֶל צִלָּא {ח} {ת} חֻוִּיהַּ יִדָּאָה מִן דָּאֵךְ | 9 |
| | | | success. | פְּלָא {חֵא} [...] ..גִּם זֶה {רַעָה} חֻוִּלָּה דְּאֶנְלִט אֶלְשֶׁרוֹר מוֹקְעָא | 10 |
| 5:15 | Another grave evil is this: He must depart | וְגִם־זֶה רַעָה חֻוִּלָּה כֹּל־עֲמָת | caused the worst of evils to occur, | | |

90 There is an oblique stroke above the *mēm* of this word. See also, Ar.53.12 F1 recto, line 11.
91 Read *madhmūm*.
92 Scribal error corrected on following line; omit.
93 It is difficult to tell whether the sign below the *gûmel* of this word is *ḥîreq* or *sêrê*.

(cont.)

| Verse | NJPS | Westminster Leningrad | Translation | Transcription | Line |
|-------|--|--|--|---|------|
| | | | and I will gather it to me those who were together; then just as | וְאַגְמְעָהּ לְאֵל [צ].. [אֵלִי]. {אֵל} [ד] יֵן מְעָא אֲד כִּאֵן כְּמָא | 11 |
| | just as he came. ⁹⁴ So what is the good of his toiling for the wind? | שָׁבָא בֶן יִלְדָּה וּמִה־יִתְרוֹן לֹא שָׁיֵעַמָּל לְרוּיָח: | he came ... | גֹּא | 12 |

Line 1: The ט of וְאַגְמְעָם (*u-ʾaʿzam*, “consider the enormity”) should be read as ظ. This verb is another imperative form, following the same discourse structure and classicising hypocorrection that occurred with the imperative of عَلِمَ (“know”) in 5:9 (and probably 4:13).

Line 1: The ink spot below the *hê* in رَأَيْتُهَا (*raʾaytuh*, “I have seen [it]”) is probably accidental. Based on comparisons with other 3ms suffixes, it is unlikely that the scribe meant to record a final vowel here.

Line 2: יַחַפֵּס is one of only a few unpointed words, which seems odd given the potential ambiguity of this sentence. Read as form IV, *yuhfiz* (“it angers, annoys”).

Line 3: In טְהוּר (*zuhūr*, “revelation”), *shēwā* appears to represent /u/ in an unstressed, open syllable.

Line 3: The expected CA form of זִלְתוּהָ is *ziltuhu*, but the text reads *zaltuh*. This interchange of /a/ for /i/ is likely a pseudo-classical correction.

Line 6: {הָרָא} זָא (*zāhir^{an}*, “apparent”) and {אֲטָנָא} [ב] (*bāṭin^{an}*, “concealed”) are notably antonyms.⁹⁵ Compare the same root in verse 5:12: טְהוּר (*zuhūr*, “revelation”).

Line 9: יָדָא (*yadāh*, “his hand”) is an irregular form in Arabic, and seems to mimic the corresponding Hebrew word (יָדוֹ).

Line 12: The word גֹּא (*gā*, “he came”) appears as a catchword in the margin below the text, near the end of the final line. It marks the end of the bifolium, and completes the previous clause (אֲד כִּאֵן כְּמָא גֹּא, “then just as he came”).

94 The NJPS translation moves this sentence up to verse 14, but we have moved it back to show the contrast between the different versions of the text.

95 Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, pp. 219–221.

4.9 *T-S Ar.27.55 Fi Recto*

| Verse | NJPS | Westminster Leningrad | Translation | Transcription | Line |
|-------|---|--|---|--|------|
| 11:8 | Even if a man lives many years, let him enjoy himself in all of them, remembering how many the days of darkness | כִּי אִם־שָׁנִים הָרַבָּה יִחְיֶה הָאָדָם בְּכָלֶם יִשְׂמַח וַיִּזְכֹּר אֶת־יָמֵי הַחֹשֶׁךְ | ... they gladdened {him} with joys, remembering the darkened {days}. | בִּאלֹא־פֶרֶאֱחַ גְּדוּל[ו]ן[ה] יִכּוֹן ל[ל] {אִיאַם} אֶל־מִטְלֵמָה דֹּא־כֶרֶא | 1 |
| | are going to be. The only future is nothingness! | כִּי־הָרַבָּה יִהְיוּ כָּל־שְׂבָא הֶבֶל: | Indeed, they are those which are most numerous among remaining days. | אֲנָהּ אֱלִיתִי תִכּוֹן מִן מָ ... אִיאַם ב[אק] יֵה אֶכְתֶּרֶא | 2 |
| 11:9 | O youth, enjoy yourself while you are young! | שְׂמַח בַּחֹר בִּילְדוּתְיָךְ | So then, O mankind, be joyous in your youth | שְׂמַח בַּחֹר תָּם פֶּכֶן אִי־הָא אֶל־אֲנִסְאֵן פִּי חֹאֵל חִדְאִתְתָּךְ | 3 |
| | Let your heart lead you to enjoyment in the days | וַיְטִיבְךָ לִבְךָ בְּיָמֵי | and in your affairs. May your musings be very beautiful, in those days | בְּשֹׂאנֵךְ פֶּרֶחֶא וְלִי־חֶסֶן מִנֵּךְ פ[כֶרֶךְ] פִּי תִלְךָ מִן אִיאַם | 4 |
| | of your youth. Follow the desires of your heart and the glances of your eyes— | בַּחֹר וְתָךְ וְהִלֵּךְ בְּדֶרֶכֶי לִבְךָ וּבִמְרָאֵי עֵינֶיךָ | of your youth. When your mind, | [ש] בִּאֲבֶךְ גִּדֵּא וְחִינִיד עֵקֶלְךָ | 5 |
| | but know well that God will call you to account for all such things— | וְדַע כִּי עַל־כָּל־אַלֶּה יִבְרָאֵךְ הָאֱלֹהִים בְּמִשְׁפָּט: | {then} do well in what He will reckon which is | {פ} אֲחֶסֶן מִמָּא יִחְסֶה מָא בָּאֵן | 6 |
| 11:10 | | | well. | א... ל[א] ... [כד] ד חֶסֶנָּא: וְהֶסֶר | 7 |
| | and banish care from your mind, and pluck sorrow out of your flesh! For youth and black hair are fleeting. | וְהֶסֶר פֶּעַס מִלְּבָבְךָ וְהַעֲבֵר רָעָה מִבְּשָׂרְךָ כִּי־הִילָדוּת וְהַשְׁחָרוּת הֶבֶל: | anger | {פֶּעַס} ... מָא גְּצִבָּא | 8 |
| | | | upon | לֹא עָלִי | 9 |
|  |  |  | ..... | ..... | 10 |
| 12:1 | So appreciate your vigor in the days of | וְזָכַר אֶת־בּוֹרְאֶיךָ בְּיָמֵי | ..... | ..... | 11 |

Line 6: The second *mēm* of ממה is superscripted, apparently correcting *mā* to be *mimmā* (“from what, in what”).

4.10 *T-S Ar.27.55 Fi Verso*

| Verse | NJPS | Westminster Leningrad | Translation | Transcription | Line |
|-------|--|--|--|---|------|
| | your youth, before those days | בְּחֹרֶתֶיךָ עַד אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִבְאֹוּ יָמַי | your youth, before ... days ... and you lose | שְׁבַתְךָ קִבֵּל ... [אֵימָם] וְ... פִתְעָעִי מִן | 1 |
| | of sorrow come and those years arrive of which you will say, | הַרְעָה וְהִגִּיעוּ שָׁנִים אֲשֶׁר תֹּאמַר | your strength, when at it from the attainment | קוּתְךָ אֵד תִּבְלֵ [נָע ...] עֲנֶה מִן בְּלוּג | 2 |
| | "I have no pleasure in them"; | אֵין לִי בָהֶם חֶפֶץ: | of your desire, as you intended. | מֵרָאֵד מִן דָּאד מִקְצֵדָא ע {ד} אֲשֶׁר לֹא וּקְבֵל אֵן תִּטְלֵם | 3 |
| 12:2 | before | עַד אֲשֶׁר | And before | | |
| | sun and light and | לֹא־תִחְשַׁךְ הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וְהָאֹור | the sun and all the lights darken over you, and hidden from you are | עֲלִיד אֶלְשֶׁמֶס וְאֶל־אֲנֹאֵר גְּמִיעָא וּתְכִפִּי עֲנָד אֶל | 4 |
| | moon and stars grow dark, | וְהַיָּרֵחַ וְהַכּוֹכָבִים וְשָׁבוּ | the planets and the {moon}, at that from the {earth}, | כּוֹאֵב וְאֶל {קִמַּר}..... עֲנֵד דָּאד מִן אֶל־אֶרֶץ {עֵן}.. | 5 |
| | and the clouds come back again after the rain: | הָעֲנָנִים אַחֵר הַגֶּשֶׁם: | like the clouds | כְּאֶלְגִּיוֹם אֶל {ת}..... בּוּיִם וְדָאד ל {א} | 6 |
| | | | And likewise, without | | |
| 12:3 | When the guards of the house become shaky, And the men of valor are bent, | בַּיּוֹם שִׁילְעוּ שְׁמָרֵי הַבַּיִת וְהַתְּעוּתוֹ אַנְשֵׁי הַחֵיל | a doubt, it shall be in the | שָׁךְ יִכּוֹן פִּיאֵל..... [פ]ט[ה] אֶל..... | 7 |
| | And the maids that grind, grown few, are idle, And the ladies that peer | וּבְטָלוּ הַטְּחָנוֹת כִּי מַעֲטוּ | from it | מ [ג]ה ⁹⁶ אֶר..... | 8 |
| | through the windows grow dim, | וְחִשְׁכוּ הָרְאֹוֹת בְּאַרְבָּעוֹת: | and darken | וּתִטְלֵם..... | 9 |

96 The *nūn* here may have *shēwā* or *qibbūs*. Both forms are attested elsewhere in the manuscript.

(cont.)

| Verse | NJPS | Westminster Leningrad | Translation | Transcription | Line |
|-------|---|--|-------------|---------------|------|
| 12:4 | And the doors to the street are shut—With the noise of the hand mill growing fainter, | וּסְגְרוּ דְלֵתֵים בְּשׁוּק בְּשִׁפְלָ קוֹל הַטְחֲנָה | ..... | ..... | 10 |
| | And the song of the bird growing feebler, And all the strains of music dying down; | וַיִּקְוֶם לְקוֹל הַצִּפּוֹר וַיִּשְׁחוּ כָּל־בְּנוֹת | ..... | ..... | 11 |

Line 6: In בְּאַלְגִּיּוּם (*ka-ʿal-ghuyūm*, “like the clouds,” 12:2), *shēwā* appears to represent /u/ in an unstressed, open syllable.

4.11 Ar.27.55 F2 Recto

| Verse | NJPS | Westminster Leningrad | Translation | Transcription | Line |
|-------|---|---|---|---|------|
| | | | ... ugly things. הַשִּׁיר: | קבאִיתא: גם מ[ג]בה יד[א]ד [א....ל.]ז הם דאימא | 1 |
| 12:5 | When one is afraid of heights | גַּם מִגְבֵּה יֵלֵאוּ | Thus they always | | |
| | And there is terror on the road.— | וְחִתְחִתִּים בְּדֶרֶךְ | fear God on their paths terrified of Him; | מִן אֱלֹהִים יִכְאֹפִין [פי] טְרַאִיקָה[ם] {.. [דא] מִנָּה [י]רַעְדִין | 2 |
| | For the almond tree may blossom, The grasshopper be burdened, | וַיִּנְאֹץ הַשִּׁקְדִּי וַיִּסְתַּבֵּל הַחֲזָב | and with Him, certainly, everyone is among the [rejected things], clinging to them, hurriedly seeking | וְעִנְדָּה יִקְיֵנָא [בל] מִן [אל][מ]{נפאת] לְאַזְמָהָא וַיִּסְתַּרְסֵל | 3 |
| | And the caper bush may bud again; | וְתִפְרֵ הָאֲבִיוֹנָה | to recombine them as their composition rapidly dissolves. | אַלְקֻטְבַּ מַעְגֵּלָא [מַעְהָא] וְ[תִנְחַל]ל [מ]תַּעֲדִיאַת עֵן | 4 |

(cont.)

| Verse | NJPS | Westminster Leningrad | Translation | Transcription | Line |
|-------|---|---|---|--|------|
| | But man sets out for his eternal abode, | כִּי־הֵלֵךְ הָאָדָם אֶל־בֵּית עוֹלָמוֹ | But the always- righteous man is admirable, | תִּרְכִּיבָהּא [וִי] כּוֹן אַלֵּא [נִ]סֵּאן [אַלְצֵאלַח] אַלְדֵּא [יִ]ס [כִּי] [רִ]א ⁹⁷ | 5 |
| | With mourners all around in the street.— | וְסִבְבוּ בְּשׁוּק הַסָּפְדִים: | and his mourners, in voices | [וּנְאֻדְבָהּ] פִּי [אַלְאִסּוּאֵט] עַד אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִרְתֵּק | 6 |
| 12:6 | Before the silver cord snaps, | עַד אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִרְחֹק [יִרְתֵּל] חֶבֶל הַכֶּסֶף | the back | [מִ] [אַלְטֵהָ] | 7 |
| | And the golden bowl crashes, The jar is shattered at the spring, | וְתִרְצַץ גִּלְתִּי הַזֶּהָב וְתִשְׁבֵּר כָּד עַל־הַמְּבֹועַ | the living | עֵ אֶלְחֵי־יָאֵה ⁹⁸ | 8 |
| | And the jug is smashed at the cis- tern. | וְנִרְצַץ הַנֶּגְלָל אֶל־הַבּוֹר: | dwelling. | [ח] [צִאֲרָא] | 9 |
| 12:7 | And the dust returns to the ground As it was, And the lifebreath | וַיָּשׁוּב הָעָפָר עַל־הָאָרֶץ בְּשִׁהִיָּה וְהָרוּחַ | {was} in the first place, | [כ] [אֵן אֶנְפָּא] | 10 |
| | returns to God Who bestowed it. | תָּשׁוּב אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר נָתַנָּה: | previously. | סֵאלְפָּא: | 11 |

Line 2: There is a *rāfē* above the *dālet* of רָעֲדוּן [יִ], but the reading is almost certainly with *dāl* rather than *dhāl*: יַרְעֲדוּן (*yarʿadūn*, “they are terrified”).

Line 11: The *pē* in סֵאלְפָּא (*sālīfān*, “previously”) has one of only three *rāfēs* in the manuscript. Another is in רָעֲדוּן [יִ] on this page (see comment above), and the last is on the *pē* in אֵלְלָף (*ʿallaf*, “he composed”) in verse 12:9. It is interesting that two of the three occur in a word that contain *ʾālep*, *lāmed*, and *pē*. This usage may be a reminder not to confuse these words with similar Aramaic words that also have אֵלְף, but which can be pronounced with a stop (/p/) rather than the Arabic fricative (/f/).

97 The vowels of this word are visible, but the first two letters are not clear.

98 There is an *ʿayin* in the margin after this word.

4.12 *Ar.27.55 F2 Verso*

| Verse | NJPS | Westminster Leningrad | Translation | Transcription | Line |
|-------|--|---|---|--|------|
| 12:8 | Utter futility—said Koheleth – | הַבֵּל הַבְּלִים אָמַר הַקֹּהֵלֶת | And that is what al- Gāmi‘ said from the beginning, that | הַבֵּל הַבְּלִים וְ[א] דְּמֵא קֹאֲלָהּ אֶלְגָּאֻמַּע בְּדִיא מִן אֵן אֵל | 1 |
| | All is futile! | הַכֹּל הַבֵּל: | everything is like those who pass away: {only}, without fail, passing away. | כָּל כֹּאֻפֶּאֻנִין אֶ[נְמֵא] לֹא בְּד פֶּאֻנִיא: וְיִתֵּר שְׁהִיה וּכְאֵן אֵל | 2 |
| 12:9 | A further word: | וְיִתֵּר | And al- | | |
| | Because Koheleth was a sage, he con- tinued to instruct the people. | שְׁהִיה קֹהֵלֶת חֲכָם עוֹד לְמַד־דַּעַת אֶת־הָעָם | Gāmi‘ was thus wise and distinguished, so he taught the people | גָּאֻמַּע אֵד דֹּאֵד חֲכִימָא פֶּאֻצֵּל אֶלְשַׁעֲב | 3 |
| | He listened to and tested the soundness of many maxims. | וְאַיֵּן וְחִלָּךְ תִּקֵּן מִשְׁלֵים הַרְבֵּה: | complete knowledge. He composed for them whenever they would listen, and he consid- ered sayings, | עֲלָמָא כֹאֻמֵּלֵא אֵלְלֵף פִּיה מִמָּא סְמַעו אֶעֱתִבֵּר אֶקְוֹאֵלֵא | 4 |
| | | | organising them [.....], he achieved [greatness]. | יִנְתַּטְמָהָא [אֵל..ל] נֵאֵל [כְּבֵר]: בִּקֵּשׁ קֹה[ל]ת וְטוֹ[ו] לֹא מֵא | 5 |
| | | | | | |
| 12:10 | Koheleth | בִּקֵּשׁ קֹהֵלֶת | Long he | | |
| | sought to discover useful sayings | לְמַצֵּא דְּבִרֵּי־חֲכָפִין | sought the he would reveal it, desir- ing it, and | אֵלְתָּמַס פִּי אֵל.....ל. יִבִּיחָהּ וּמְרֵאֲדָה פִּכָּאֵן | 6 |
| | and recorded gen- uinely truthful sayings. | וְכָתוּב יִשָּׁר דְּבָרֵי אָמֶת: | what he found was [written] | מֵא ו[ג] דְּהֵא מִכְ[ת]..[{דְּבָרֵי}..... | 7 |
| 12:11 | The sayings of the wise are like goads, like nails fixed in prodding sticks. They were given by one Shepherd. | דְּבָרֵי חֲכָמִים כְּדִרְבָּנוֹת וְכִמְשֻׁמְרוֹת נְטוּעִים בְּעֵלֵי אֶסְפוֹת נִתְּנוּ מִרְעָה אֶחָד: | He said: with | חֲכָמִים {כֹּד} פִּקָּאֵל עֲנֵד..... | 8 |

(cont.)

| Verse | NJPS | Westminster Leningrad | Translation | Transcription | Line |
|-------|---|---|---------------------------|-------------------|------|
| | | | a rule in | חֲכָמָא פִי חֲצַר | 9 |
| 12:12 | A further word: Against them, my son, be warned! The making of many books is without limit. And much study is a wearying of the flesh. | וְיִתֵּר מִהֶמָּה בְּנֵי הַזֶּהָר עֲשׂוֹת סִפְרִים הַרְבֵּה אִין לִן וְלִהַג הַרְבֵּה יִגְעַת בָּשָׂר: | drawing together | תַּחְוִיָּה מֵעַ | 10 |
|  |  |  | ..... | אַסְאֲבָךְ מִ | 11 |

Line 2: There is a superscripted miniature *yôd* above the *yôd* of כַּאֲלֻפָּאנִין (*ka-ʾal-fānīn*, “like those who pass away”), possibly indicating that the writer perceived a consonantal *yāʾ* here.

Line 4: A reduplicated *lāmed* marks the gemination in אֲלַלֶּף (*ʾallaf*, “he composed”).

Line 6: The second *pataḥ* in אֲלֵתָמַס (*ʾaltamas*, “he sought”) suggests that the final syllable is stressed.

Line 11: This reading of אַסְאֲבָךְ is relatively clear, but it is not an Arabic word. It may be a misspelling of אַסְאֲבָק (*ʾāsābiq*, perhaps “premeditations?”),⁹⁹ which could result from the writer mistranscribing an unpunctuated Arabic-script vorlage. Alternatively, it could be אַסְאֲכִיף (*ʾāsākif*, “thresholds”),¹⁰⁰ with the mistake coming in an interchange of בּ for פּ. There is not enough context to know for certain without more of the text.

Line 11: It appears that there is only enough space on this leaf for the text to run through verse 12. The scribe may have omitted the final two verses in order to fit the end of the book on this piece of parchment, or there may be another leaf with 4–6 additional lines of text.

99 See Blau, *Dictionary*, p. 286; although he does not list this particular form.

100 This would be an irregular form of the plural, rather than the expected *ʾaskāf*; see Blau, *Dictionary*, pp. 302–303; Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, p. 1392.

5 Conclusion

The combination of near-complete vocalisation and the palaeographic provenance makes this manuscript a strong source for the historical dialectology of twelfth-century Egyptian Judaeo-Arabic. It also offers a glimpse into the culture of a well-trained scribe, clearly familiar with the Tiberian recitation tradition and yet comfortable copying a biblical book in a highly non-standard way. Moreover, it contains a translation of Ecclesiastes that varies considerably from the original Hebrew text. This translation does not seem to match any well-known Arabic Bible translation from the early medieval period, suggesting it could be the writer's own version, meant for personal use.

This study is not an exhaustive treatment of the linguistic features of this manuscript, nor has it explored the meaning of the Ecclesiastes translation in any significant depth. Rather, we have only aimed to produce a guide for future inquiry. In particular, the text requires further investigation with respect to its syntax, inflectional morphology, and lexical inventory.

As a potential example of a personal translation of Ecclesiastes, this manuscript also presents a unique opportunity for scholars of Bible translations. While medieval Judaeo-Arabic Bible translations by writers like Sa'adya Gaon were certainly more well-known, personal translations like the one in this manuscript deserve closer examination.¹⁰¹ Indeed, this manuscript shows that while such translations might remain largely unexplored, they have the potential to offer a wealth of information on the history of both Hebrew scribal culture and the Arabic language.

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¹⁰¹ Griffith notes that partial Judaeo-Arabic translations of the Bible existed as early as the ninth century, and Sa'adya may have utilised some of them in his own work. See Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic*, pp. 123–124, 156, 163. For a recent study that discusses some early translations and commentaries, see Blau and Hopkins, *Ha-'Aravit ha-yehudit ha-qedumah*, esp. pp. 59–112.

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